A Note on some Beetles Captured in Moccas Park, Herefordshire, during 1975

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During 1975 I was able to make several visits to this well known collecting ground, in most cases accompanied by my wife (S. Cooter, née Morris). The majority of the visits were made during the summer, and especially between May and August. Invariably the weather was warm and very dry throughout the summer, so dry that the lake was clearly decreasing in size as the season progressed, and at the time of writing this note (June 1976) had reduced to about one-third its size.

Despite energetic searching in late May and the first week in June, no sign of *Pyrrhidium sanguineum* (Linn.) was found. Collecting activities were almost entirely confined to the park-land area, the densely wooded region extending up the valley slope was only briefly visited.

The majority of the dead timber is left in the Park, either where it fell, or is cut into managable lengths and stacked close to the trunks of healthy trees, the leafy canopy giving a degree of shelter in a somewhat exposed area. Much of the timber away from shade must suffer some degree of heat sterilization, and certainly dries out more quickly. This is particularly true with beech, the bark of which after contracting and splitting soon peels away from the wood, which in turn dries out. However, it is well to record in one of the most exposed beech trunks, with very little bark attached, *Melasis buprestiodes* (Linn.), *Taphrorychus villifrons* (Dufour) and *Platypus cylindrus* (Fab.) were found not uncommonly burrowing into the hard wood (in the case of the former and latter) or under the scant bark (in the case of *villifrons*).

Species marked with an asterisk (*) are to the best of my knowledge additions to the Moccas Park list.

**Colon serripes* Sahlberg. Two examples, both female, by general sweeping (at about 21.30 hrs.) on the slope immediately behind the lake, 26.vi.1975.

**Sepedophilus bipunctatus* (Gravenhorst). One specimen in wet rotten beech, 25.v.1975, S. Morris. This is the second Herefordshire locality for this very local beetle.

Plectophloeus nitidus (Fairmaire). Single specimens among frass, etc., under the bark of the same prostrate rotten oak, 25.v.1975 and 19.v.1975, this time in company with a solitary *Batrisodes venustus* (Reichenbach).

Hypebaeus flavipes (Fab.). The late G. H. Ashe made a pencil sketch on the interleaving of his copy of "Fowler" (now in my possession) indicating the oak tree from which he and doubtless many other Coleopterists obtained this interesting little Malachiid. Thirty years later, the beetle was still reasonably common on "Ashe's Oak", specimens being beaten from it on 21.vi, 26.vi and 5.vii.75. A single specimen from another red-rotten oak at the Park Lodge end, and three on different

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occasions from an old oak in parkland, but up the hillside.
Lymexylon navalae* (Linn.). A single gravid female taken on the wing, 5.viii.1975. The insect was observed for several minutes as it flew up and down and about one foot away from the long-ago debarked section of one of the oaks growing at the parkland/woodland boundary. It may seem odd that such a conspicuous insect as *navalae* has remained undetected in this quite well worked area. However, I would suggest that it is not a recent arrival, thus endorsing Allen's (1966, *Ent Rec.*, **78: 79-80) views on ancient forest relict species. What is more likely is that the beetle frequents the woodland area of the Park where conditions would be more favourable—much dead timber in a shaded environment. Other factors that should not be discounted are (i) that the beetle has a relatively short flight period, and is more often on the wing toward the evening, and (ii) that the wooded area of the Park has a dense undergrowth of bracken, some of it reaching to (my) head height, i.e. 6 ft., the ground is very uneven and the whole wooded part situated on a very steep slope. Combine this with the fact that most of the Moccas "specialities" appear earlier in the season than *navalae,* and are to be found in the parkland (which incidentally is nearer the road), it is apparent that the visitor would have no reason, other than curiosity, to venture into the wilderness. This is especially true if time is limited, for example a single day trip to the area. I have detected no sign of the characteristic emergence holes in any parkland oak, indicating the insects presence (as they do for example in Denny Wood, New Forest). In the woodland area with its dense canopy, such burrows may also easily escape notice.
**Henoticus serratus* (Gyllenhal). One specimen, 25.v.1975 (S. Morris), beaten from oak.
Abdera quadrifasciata (Curtis). A single specimen, under bark of an oak log, 2.viii.1975.
Eledona agricola (Herbst) is not recorded by Brendell (1974, *Royal Ent. Soc. Handbook Identification Brit. Insects*: V. (10) Tenebrionidae), from Herefordshire. Very common in an unidentified bracket-like fungus growing on oak trunks, 26.vi.1975. I have also seen specimens dating from the 1930's and 40's (R. W. Lloyd and others).

I would like to offer my most sincere thanks to Mr. and Mrs. L. Slaney for granting access to the Park on behalf of the owner Mr. R. T. G. Chester-Master, and for their general help and kindness. To Mr. P. J. Osborne for the loan of an authentic *Plectophloeus nitidus* from his own collection, captured in Blenheim Park, and for identifying *Batrisodes venustus.*

HYLES GALLII ROTT. AT PURLEY, SURREY IN 1976. — On the morning of the 22nd August there was a specimen of the Bedstraw Hawkmoth here in my light trap. The moth, which was in fine condition, arrived during a night that was cool with a clear sky. — P. M. STIRLING, 83 Grasmere Road, Purley, Surrey, CR2 1DZ.